UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/CONF.151/PC/WG.I/L.31
30 August 1991

Original: ENGLISH

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
Third session
Geneva, 12 August-4 September 1991
Working Group I
Agenda item 3 (a)

LAND RESOURCES DEFORESTATION

Position paper submitted by Finland

Forest issues in Agenda 21

Based on discussions on Guiding Principles for a Consensus on Forests, Agenda 21 could include the following programme areas.

A. An agreement to negotiate a global convention on forests

1. A global convention on the management, conservation and development of all types of forests (including woodlands) should be created through negotiations under the auspices of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It would urge a balance between developmental and environmental aspects within the forest sector, acknowledge the sovereign right for decision-making by each party, and emphasize the global responsibility of parties related to forest heritage and the functioning of forest ecosystems. The official negotiations on a convention should be started as soon as possible after UNCED to have it ready to be signed in 1994/1995.

GE.91-72381/1403H
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B. Greening of the world

2. Greening of the world, through reforestation and afforestation, should be set as a target in order to provide sufficient long-term production of fuelwood, industrial wood and other goods and services, to maintain biological diversity, to create new sinks for carbon dioxide, to improve watershed management, combat desertification, create facilities for agroforestry, and to alleviate poverty taking into account the role of women. The greening programme should aim at ensuring that the standing stock (stemwood volume of living trees) no longer decreases after the year 2005 on the global basis.

C. National plans for the utilization and conservation of forests

3. National plans for the conservation and sustainable utilization of different forest ecosystems should be developed to meet present and future social, economic and cultural needs. These plans should be integrated with land-use management. The Guiding Principles for the Consensus on Forests give a basis for these plans. The needs of indigenous peoples must be fully respected.

D. Technological and financial assistance in forestry and forest conservation

4. Special priority should be given to forestry and forest conservation in development programmes at both national, regional and global level. Existing resources should be used effectively and new resources nationally and internationally should be made available as required. Financial and technological assistance should be targetted according to the national plans of forestry and forest conservation.

E. Research, dissemination of research results and training

5. Research and its applications should be fully utilized to improve the basis of forest management and conservation. Cooperation should be strengthened in this field nationally, regionally and globally. A balanced view should be adopted in all phases of research and education between the economic, social and environmental aspects related to forests. Research, education and training should carefully elaborate the various roles of forest ecosystems.